

## **The Hardmoors 110**

Do you think you could run 110 miles in 36 hours?

One Retford Ultra Runner who took up the challenge is Steve Wathall who successfully completed the Hardmoors 110 race last weekend.

The Hardmoors 110 Ultramarathon follows the dramatic Cleveland Way National Trail encircling the North Yorkshire Moors to Saltburn and then Cleveland Heritage coastline south through Runswick Bay, Staithes, Dracula's Whitby, the old smugglers town of Robin Hoods Bay, Ravenscar and the seaside resort of Scarborough before finishing in Filey.

Commencing in the North Yorkshire market town of Helmsley at 5pm on last Friday, just 26 ultra-marathoners toed the starting line with a time limit of 36 hours to complete the 110 mile single stage race. Joining this elite band was local athlete and ultra runner, Steve Wathall



**Steve just before the start looking fresh and ready for the challenge**

The first checkpoint was at the White Horse near Sutton Bank and Steve covered this 9.5 miles in 1 hour 26 mins. arriving at the checkpoint in 6th position. The next 14 mile stage heads north to Osmotherley and the evening heat was to take it's toll although Steve maintained his 6 mph pace. After a brief stop to take on food and water Steve headed off into the night looking forward to the sun going down and the associated drop in temperature.

The next leg heads over the Cleveland Hills between Carlton Bank and Clay Bank where Steve arrived just before midnight by the light of his headtorch. Then it was up to the old railway at Bloworth Crossing before heading north again through Kildale and over the distinctively shaped hill Roseberry Topping and on towards the coast at Saltburn where the sun was just beginning to break through and the waves were crashing up against the foreshore to welcome the dawn. Saltburn marked the 58 mile point and just over half way!! This had been Steve's strongest leg as he recovered from the effects of the heat of the previous evening and he set off strongly on his long run down the east coast.

At this stage in the race it is important to stay focused and keep eating and drinking although the body simply craves rest and 15 of the original 26 athletes who started the race were to fall by the wayside as exhaustion got the better of them. Inevitably the pace slows and it becomes as much of a mental challenge as a physical one just to keep putting one foot in front of the other but Steve proved that he was up to the challenge.



### **Steve contemplating the next 30 miles at Robin Hoods Bay**

At Robin Hoods Bay and with more than a normal marathon distance still to cover it was time for Steve to dig deep and draw on all his mental and physical reserves. After a change of socks and lancing a blister, Steve emptied the sand out of his shoes and set out on the next 30 miles which were to take him 8 hours and brought him to the finishing line in Filey in 6th position and a total time of 28 hours and 59 minutes.

Most people would consider they deserved a well earned rest after such an endeavour but with a two day mountain marathon in the NW Highlands of Scotland next weekend it was business as usual for Steve on a club training run on Monday night!!